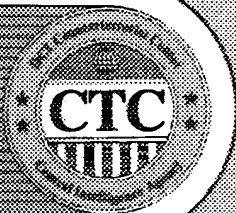


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Libya: Reinvigorating Support for Terrorism

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Highlights

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Libya: Reinvigorating Support for Terrorism []

Libyan leader Mu'ammar al-Qadhafi has begun during the last two years to rebuild Libya's links to terrorism, negating the cosmetic gestures he had made in the wake of UN sanctions in April 1992. Libya has increased its financial and logistic support for Palestinian rejectionist and terrorist groups, such as the PFLP-GC, and Qadhafi's intelligence apparatus continues to target Libyan dissidents, as evidenced by the December 1993 abduction of a prominent Libyan oppositionist in Cairo. Nonetheless, Tripoli has refrained from sponsoring anti-Western terrorist attacks since sanctions were imposed to stave off harsher measures, such as a potentially regime-threatening UN oil embargo. There is no evidence Libya is currently planning to attack Western targets, and reporting suggests that Qadhafi would be unlikely to do so unless he believed his current policy of restraint was no longer furthering his objectives.

[]

A Few Cosmetic Measures

Following the indictments of two Libyan intelligence officers in November 1991 and the UN imposition of sanctions for its downing of Pan Am 103 over Scotland and a French airliner (UTA 772) in Africa, Libya embarked on a campaign to reduce its terrorist profile to avoid additional UN sanctions or a US military strike:¹

- In December 1991, Qadhafi stated that the Abu Nidal organization was not present in Tripoli.
- Also that month, Qadhafi named Yusif al-Dibri to head the External Security Organization (ESO), Libya's foreign intelligence service. []
[] Dibri was chosen because he was "clean," and his primary task was to improve Libya's image with the West.

[]

- In June 1992, Qadhafi publicly promised to close the Islamic Call Society and the World Anti-Imperialism Center, Libyan-sponsored organizations that the United States Government publicly identified as being cover organizations for Libyan terrorist activities.
- By August 1992, Libya had razed or partially dismantled [] terrorist training camps, []

Reinvigorating Terrorist Links

Over the past two years Qadhafi has reversed some of these measures and failed to follow through with others. Despite Qadhafi's assurances regarding Abu Nidal, for example []
[] Abu Nidal maintains his headquarters and his residence in Tripoli. []
September 1994, Qadhafi replaced "clean" ESO chief Debri with Musa Kusa, a Qadhafi loyalist and long-time intelligence officer who is wanted by French authorities for questioning about his involvement in the UTA 772 bombing. While less active than before, the Islamic Call Society continues to support insurgent groups, and the Anti-Imperialism Center remained open as of May 1995. []

Qadhafi also has resumed more active involvement in terrorist-related activities. Qadhafi may have concluded that he has little to fear from current UN sanctions; the UN measures have had a minimal impact on Libya's economy because they have not seriously eroded oil revenues, which account for more than 95 percent of Libya's export earnings. []

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Trying To Sabotage the Peace Process. Since the signing of the Gaza-Jericho accord in September 1993, Qadhafi has publicly condemned the peace process and has stepped up support for groups that violently oppose peace with Israel. This support, however, is less than what Qadhafi provided to such groups in the 1980s, when Libyan financial support for terrorists worldwide was at its zenith:

- [redacted] Qadhafi had resumed funding by 1994 for the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command, most of which Tripoli had cut in 1989, and had become the PFLP-GC's primary foreign financial sponsor. [redacted]

- Libya has provided sporadic funding to the Palestinian Islamic Jihad-Shiqaqi faction since its leader, Fathi Shiqaqi, met with Qadhafi in December 1993, [redacted]

- In November 1994, Libya and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) created an organization to carry out *intifada* activities in the occupied territories, [redacted]

- Qadhafi pledged in a March 1995 meeting in Tripoli to provide the Islamic Resistance Movement (HAMAS) and PIJ militants with resources to wage the *intifada*, according to public statements made by HAMAS and PIJ leaders [redacted]

Qadhafi remains an inconsistent sponsor of these groups, however, undermining his ability to influence or direct their activities. Libya has often been criticized in the past by terrorist groups for being an unreliable sponsor. [redacted]

Targeting Dissidents. Libya's primary intelligence focus, apart from opposing the peace process, remains keeping tabs on, and occasionally assassinating, Libyan dissidents:

- Libya's most recent direct act of international terrorism was its apparent abduction of Mansur Kikhiya, a prominent dissident and US permanent resident, in Cairo in December 1993.² [redacted]
- Libyan intelligence officers continue to monitor Libyan dissidents in a number of countries in Europe and the Middle East.

Qadhafi's More Aggressive Stance Likely To Continue

Because Libya's resumption of rhetorical and financial support for rejectionist groups has not resulted in new international sanctions, Qadhafi is likely to follow his past pattern of increasing his support until he meets opposition. Violent opposition to Israel has been a cornerstone of Qadhafi's foreign policy since he came to power in 1969, and he will not forego this policy easily. Antidissident operations remain a priority for Libyan intelligence, but we expect that the ESO will be careful about selecting targets for assassination to avoid possible Western retribution. [redacted]

Qadhafi has refrained from any attacks against the West since sanctions were imposed to stave off more serious international sanctions. Qadhafi likely would reconsider his standdown on anti-Western terrorism if he believed that the United States or other Western countries intended to implement actions that could threaten his regime, such as the imposition of a UN oil embargo. [redacted]

² According to the US Code, "terrorism" is premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience. "International terrorism" is terrorism involving citizens or the territory of more than one country. [redacted]

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